



Universität Zürich

Deutsches Seminar

Schönberggasse 9
CH-8001 Zürich
Tel. ++41 44 634 25 61
Fax ++41 44 634 49 05
spitzmueller@ds.uzh.ch

www.ds.unizh.ch/lehrstuhlduerscheid

Language, Linguistics and the matter of 'Identity': The case of Anglicisms in post-1990 Germany

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Dr. Jürgen Spitzmüller

1 Outline

1. Introduction
2. Historical background
3. Reasons for the development
4. Discursive patterns and concepts
5. The role of the linguists
6. Conclusions

2 The Data

Newspapers: 1566 Texts (1990–6/2001)

Magazines: 208 Texts (1990–6/2001)

Others: 119 Documents (1991–2001)

Total: 1893 Documents (1990–6/2001)

2.1 Newspapers

Name (publishing place)	Spread	Period	Documents
FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG	supra-regional	1993–6/2001	397
SÜDDEUTSCHE ZEITUNG (Munich)	supra-regional	1994–6/2001	335
FRANKFURTER RUNDSCHAU	supra-regional	1999–6/2001	156
TAZ – DIE TAGESZEITUNG (Berlin)	supra-regional	1990–6/2001	150
DIE ZEIT (Hamburg) [weekly]	supra-regional	1995–6/2001	135
DIE WELT/WELT AM SONNTAG (Berlin)	supra-regional	5/1995–6/2001	110*
MANNHEIMER MORGEN	regional	1991, 1994–6/2001	80
BADISCHE ZEITUNG (Freiburg)	regional	1990–6/2001	69
DIE PRESSE (Vienna)	supra-regional	1997–6/2001	18*
Others**	mixed	1990–6/2001	116
Summary			1566

* no letters to the editor included in the database

** not systematically investigated



2.2 Magazines

Name (publishing place)	Period	Documents
FOCUS	1993–6/2001	87
DER SPIEGEL	1990–6/2001	64
STERN	1993–6/2001	26
Others**	1990–6/2001	31
Summary		208

** not systematically investigated

2.3 Others

Name (publishing place)	Period	Documents
Books & articles	1991–2001	65
Internet**	1997–2001	26
Radio broadcasts	1997–2001	18
TV broadcasts	1996–2001	9
Songs	2000	1
Summary		119

** not systematically investigated

3 Diachronic Development

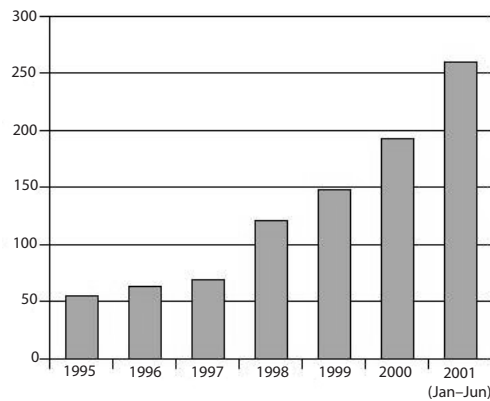


Figure 1: Number of articles* on Anglicisms in systematically investigated newspapers and magazines, 1995–6/2001.

(*per year, 2001: in the first 6 months)

4 Metaphors

4.1 Frequencies (of selected metaphors)

Concept (type)	Frequencies	
	Doc. Total	Doc. Percent
<i>Language is an Organism</i>	723	52%
– Language change is war	608	44%
– Illness and Death	162	11.7%
– Care	138	10%
<i>Language is a Substance</i>	512	37%
– Purity	333	24.1%
– Decaying	85	6.2%
– Mixing	64	4.6%
– Disintegrating	64	4.6%
<i>Language is a Container</i>	331	24%
– Infiltration	227	16.4%
<i>Language is an Artefact</i>	206	15%
– Building	134	9.7%
Total	865	63%



5 Quotations

- [1] "This book takes its cue from the coincidence of two key moments in recent European history: 2004 saw both the 15th anniversary of the events of 1989 that launched the post-Cold War era and the accession to the European Union of ten new member states [...]. At the same time, the accelerated process of unification has renewed and heightened the tension between national and supra-national interests. One of the most tangible manifestations of this tension – between the promotion of, and resistance to, social, economic and political unification – is in conflicting languages ideologies, policies and practices." (Stevenson/Mar-Molinero 2006: 1)
- [2] «Der allgemeine deutsche Sprachverein ist ins Leben getreten, um 1) die Reinigung der Sprache von unnöthigen fremden Bestandtheilen zu fördern, – 2) die Erhaltung und Wiederherstellung des echten Geistes und eigenthümlichen Wesens der deutschen Sprache zu pflegen – und 3) auf diese Weise das allgemeine nationale Bewußtsein im deutschen Volke zu kräftigen.» (*Zeitschrift des Allgemeinen Deutschen Sprachvereins* 1/1886, p. 1)
- "The *Allgemeine Deutsche Sprachverein* was brought into being with the aim of promoting the cleansing of the German language from unnecessary foreign elements, preserving as well as re-establishing the true spirit and proper essence of the German language and thereby strengthening the general national consciousness in the German nation."
[My translation]
- [3] «Oh Herr, bitte gib mir meine Sprache zurück, /
ich sehne mich nach Frieden und nem kleinen Stückchen Glück. /
Lass uns noch ein Wort verstehn in dieser schweren Zeit, /
öffne unsre Herzen, mach die Hirne weit.
Ich bin zum Bahnhof gerannt und war a little bit too late: /
Auf meiner neuen Swatch war's schon kurz vor after eight. /
Ich suchte die Toilette, doch ich fand nur ein «McClean», /
ich brauchte noch Connection und ein Ticket nach Berlin. /
Draußen saßen Kids und hatten Fun mit einem Joint. /
Ich suchte eine Auskunft, doch es gab nur'n Service Point. /
Mein Zug war leider abgefah'n – das Traveln konnt ich knicken. /
Da wollt ich Hähnchen essen, doch man gab mir nur McChicken.
[...]» *Wise Guys: «Denglisch»* (Radio, 2006)
- "Oh lord, please give me my language back, /
I'm longing for peace and for a little bit of luck. /
Please let us understand a single word in these dark days, /
open our hearts, widen or minds.
I ran to the railway station and was a little bit too late: /
According to my new *Swatch*, it was just before *after eight*. /
I looked for the rest room, but all I found was a '*McClean*', /
I still needed a *connection* and a *ticket* to Berlin. /
Some *kids* were sitting outside and were having *fun* with a *joint*. /
I looked for information, but there was only a *service point*. /
Unfortunately, my train had already left – I could forget about *travelling* /
Then I wanted to eat some chicken, but all I got was *McChicken*.
[...]"
[My translation]
- [4] "The new political situation within Germany, but also the changes in the country's international position, suggested the need for a reconsideration of all kinds of questions of 'national' scope. It is more than likely that the current debate on the influence of English on German [...] is not caused by an excessive increase in Anglicisms over the past ten years but by the



fact that these Anglicisms are viewed differently now, as a consequence in public awareness in the wake of the reunification. Seen in this light, the debate on the use of Anglicisms in German is due to a reconsideration of the role the German language plays for the national identity of the Germans." (Gardt 2004: 204)

- [5] "It may seem odd to say so, but 'language' was invented in Europe. [...] The roots of this language ideology go back to the European Enlightenment and the Romantic reaction that followed. [...] The profound invention has been elaborated in many ways: in function, language is assumed to be most basically a technology for naming the world, rather than accomplishing numerous other social tasks; monolingualism is taken to be the natural state of human life. As form, named languages are assumed to be internally homogeneous; boundaries between languages are thought to be obvious and based on lack of mutual intelligibility. Linguistic forms are accepted as languages only if they are written and have literatures and norms of correctness. [...] Languages are supposed to be the property of all citizens, hence no one's in particular. [...] Ironically, as scholars have repeatedly pointed out, such a perfect homology among nation, state, and language never existed in Europe, or anywhere else."
(Gal 2006: 14–15)
- [6] "While performing language use, speakers [...] display orientations towards *orders of indexicality* – systematically reproduced, stratified meanings often called 'norms' or 'rules' of language and always typically associated with particular shapes of language (i.e. the 'standard', the prestige variety, the usual way of having conversation with my friends etc.). [...] Stratification is crucial here: we are dealing with systems that organise inequality via the attribution of different indexical meanings to language forms (e.g. by allocating 'inferior' value to the use of dialect varieties and 'superior' value to standard varieties in public speech)."
(Blommaert 2005: 73)
- [7] "Bestünde die Bringschuld der Germanisten nicht darin, auf die Sorgen der Öffentlichkeit über die Anglisierung der Sprache stärker einzugehen und sich energischer für die eigene Sprache einzusetzen?" (Schrammen 2003:50) "Isn't it the Germanists' duty to respond to the public worries about the anglicification of the language and to support their own language more strongly?" [My translation]
- [8] "Die Anglisierung hat zweifellos Fahrt aufgenommen, und zwar dramatisch. Das unterschätzt wohl ein Abwiegler wie Rudolf Hoberg, 70, Sprachwissenschaftler an der Darmstädter Technischen Universität und Vorsitzender der Gesellschaft für deutsche Sprache [...]." (Schreiber 2006: 188) "Undoubtedly, anglicification gathered speed dramatically. This is certainly underestimated by appeasers such as Rudolf Hoberg, aged 70, linguist at the TU Darmstadt and president of the Gesellschaft für deutsche Sprache [...]" [My translation]
- [9] "Es ist weniger die Indifferenz als die unterschwellige apologetische Tendenz der Linguistik, die die öffentliche Sprachkritik gegen sie aufgebracht hat." (Zimmer 2005:34) "It's not so much the indifference of linguistics but its hidden apologetic tendency that nettled the public language critics." [My translation]
- [10] "There are no superfluous words, firstly because only exceptionally do languages contain totally synonymous words and secondly because for speakers and writers no word they use is superfluous; otherwise they would not use it." (Hoberg 2004: 86)
- [11] "Prescriptivism [...] is the disfavoured half of a binary opposition, 'descriptive/prescriptive'; and this binarism sets the parameters of linguistics as a discipline. The very first thing any



student of linguistics learns is that 'linguistics is descriptive not prescriptive' – concerned, in the way of all science, with objective facts and not subjective value judgements. Prescriptivism thus represents the threatening Other, the forbidden; it is a spectre that haunts linguistics and a difference that defines linguistics." (Cameron 1995: 5)

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